

The Wellness Express™

Jump on the train to good health

Issue 2, December 2012

Chiropractic: A Total Person Approach to Health

Presented by:

Introduction

Chiropractic care is guided by a philosophical approach that is in line with natural healing principles. Though chiropractic shares important similarities with other health professions, its holistic or total person approach to health and healing distinguishes it from the modern medical model. Two key concepts help define the chiropractic approach to health: 1) That your body can heal itself once impediments or barriers to health are removed or corrected and 2) That the mind-body relationship is crucial in supporting the healing process.



Chiropractors believe that structural health can best be achieved when proper joint and soft tissue alignment is restored throughout your body. Your relationship with the natural world - how you move, how your environment causes you to move (or not move) - is a primary concern for your chiropractor. In this edition of the Wellness Express we will examine the ideas and practices that help define chiropractic's total person approach to health and well-being.

Presented by:

Early Intervention & Prevention

Chiropractors are known for their desire to intervene in the disease process as early as possible to ensure beneficial health outcomes. Chiropractors are also known for their proactive disease prevention strategies, which help ensure that common musculoskeletal health problems never develop. A 2004 study published in the *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics* notes that a significant proportion of chiropractors and chiropractic students in the United States possess a positive attitude about preventive health services, especially physical activity and diet.¹ Another study published in the same journal states that chiropractors, as a group, have a keen interest in providing their patients with health information that extends beyond spinal health.²

Treating the Cause, Not Just the Symptoms

Your chiropractor is interested in understanding the true cause of your illness or problem in order to permanently resolve it. Chiropractors perform therapeutic measures - spinal manipulation, soft tissue work, functional exercise prescription - that have the dual effect of eliminating your pain, discomfort or other symptoms and

Exercise of the Week

Back Extensions on Exercise Ball, Arms to Side

(Consult your chiropractor before starting this or any other exercise.)

Difficulty: Medium

Lie on ball face down with feet on floor, legs straight. Feet together or apart (feet apart is easier). Back in a resting, curled position. Hands positioned to side, arms straight and fingers touching floor.

The Exercise:

Use your low back muscles to bring body into a straight-spine position, shoulders back. Keep arms out to side, palms facing forwards, thumbs up. Do not hyperextend low back. Stop when body is straight. Look at floor while keeping neck in a neutral position. Hold for 1 - 2 counts.

Repeat 5 - 10 repetitions.



correcting the processes and circumstances that caused or contributed to your injury or condition. In this way, chiropractic care sets itself apart from contemporary medical practices, which often rely on drugs to temporarily mask symptoms.

Rehabilitation vs. Surgery

Many patients have turned to chiropractic care for a more natural approach to health problems and to avoid surgery when possible. Chiropractic care emphasizes rehabilitation and recuperation instead of surgical interventions and many chiropractic patients have experienced treatment outcomes that equal or exceed the treatment outcomes expected from surgery for their specific problem. This is not to say that your chiropractor will not recommend surgery in some cases. According to a 2007 study published in the *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics*, most chiropractors agree that conventional medical approaches - pharmaceuticals and surgery - are helpful when used appropriately and that many chiropractors successfully collaborate with medical doctors as part of a health care team.³

Appreciation of Factors Affecting Health

Your chiropractor has a fundamental appreciation for the various factors that can affect your health and how these factors can interact with each other to complicate your health and ability to heal. The two key factors that your chiropractor considers when creating your treatment plan are environment and lifestyle.

Your chiropractor will ask you relevant questions about each of these factors to determine your unique treatment needs and he or she will counsel you on the ways that you can best achieve long-term health success.

Use of Relevant Outcome Markers

Your chiropractor may use specific outcome markers, including surveys, range of motion assessments and functional tests, to objectively track or document your recovery progress. These outcome markers help your chiropractor understand what treatments are working and what treatments could be altered to help speed your return to health. The use of relevant outcome markers is part of an evidence-based approach to health care. According to a 2001 article published in the journal *Spine*, evidence-based care, over the long term, improves treatment outcomes in patients with acute low back pain and reduces the time these patients experience pain or discomfort.⁴

Patient-Centered, Hands-On Care

Chiropractic care is a patient-centered, hands-on healing approach that improves your musculoskeletal health and function by manipulating - gently and purposefully - affected structures or areas in your body. The very nature of chiropractic care creates an intimate healing environment that fosters healthy dialogue between patient and practitioner. Your chiropractor will use this environment and the time he or she has with you to learn more about your specific health situation and concerns.

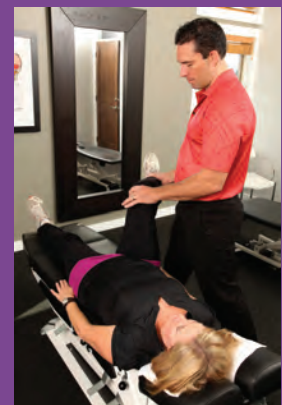
Quote to Inspire

“The mind must be cured as well as the body, as the mind - so is the body.”

Dr. Daniel D Palmer

References and Sources:

1. Hawk C, Long CR, Perillo M, Boulanger KT. A survey of US chiropractors on clinical preventive services. *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics*. 2004; 27(5): 287-298.
2. Jamison J. Health information and promotion in chiropractic clinics. *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics*. 2002; 25(4): 240-245.
3. Johnson C. Poverty and human development: Contributions from and callings to the chiropractic profession. *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics*. 2007. Oct; 30(8): 551-556.
4. McQuirk B, King W, Govind J, Lowry J, Bogduk N. Safety, efficacy, and cost effectiveness of evidence-based guidelines for the management of acute low back pain in primary care. *Spine*. 2001. Dec; 26(23): 2615-2622.



Writer: Marty Hughes, DC
Design: Elena Zhukova
Graphics: Maria Camille Almirañez
Photos: Fred Goldstein
Production: Mike Talarico

Disclaimer: Information contained in the Wellness Express™ newsletter is for educational and general purposes only and is designed to assist you in making informed decisions about your health. Any information contained herein is not intended to substitute advice from your physician or other healthcare professional.